

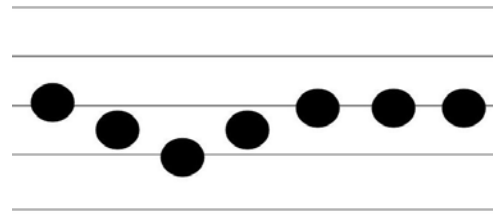
# Elements of Music

as listed in Priority Academic Student Skills (PASS)

Compiled by Cindy Scarberry, Oklahoma A+ Fellow

## 1. Melody - a succession or pattern of musical tones or pitches.

The notes or single pitches in a song create the melody. If you follow the melody from left to right on the staff, you can visually see the shape of the melody line moving down and up. The melody on the right is the first phrase of "Mary Had a Little Lamb." Follow the melody line with your finger as you sing each note, "Ma - ry had a lit - tle lamb."

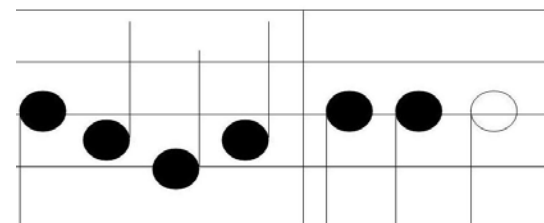


## 2. Rhythm - the movement of music through time using long or short note values.

**Beat** is the steady pulse of the music while **rhythm** notates how long or short each note should be sung or played. In other words, rhythm is how fast or slow each note moves through time. If there are words in the song, the rhythm matches the words.

**Eighth note** =  $\frac{1}{2}$  beat    ● (ti)    ●● (Titi)  
**Quarter note** = 1 beat    ● (Ta)  
**Half note** = 2 beats    ○ (Ta-a)  
**Whole note** = 4 beats    ○ (Ta-a - a- a)

Here is the first phrase of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" with the correct rhythm symbols.



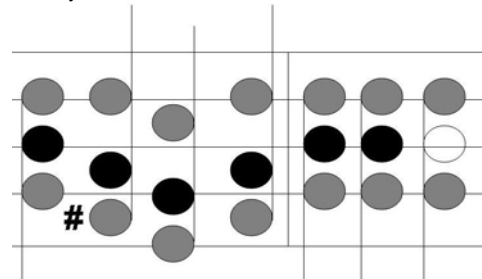
Ma - ry    had    a    lit - tle    lamb -

## 3. Harmony - two or more tones sounding together.

Harmony is created when notes are added to accompany the melody line or composition. The melody line usually stays most prominent in the song while the additional notes of the harmony complement the sound.

**Duo/ duet** = two voices or instruments  
**Trio** = three voices or instruments  
**Quartet** = four voices or instruments

Harmony has been added to the same phrase of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" in gray. Please note the shading is for identification purposes only. Usually, the notes look the same as the melody.



## 4. Form - the organization of musical composition.

Form is how a song is put together. **A B** form is where there are two sections that are different. **A B A** = Two different sections followed by the repeat of the first section. The form of a song may also be written as "Introduction, Verse, Chorus, etc."

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## 5. Tone Color (Timbre) -the quality of sound of an instrument or voice.

*Timbre, pronounced "TAM-ber", is how something sounds. Is it a light sound like a flute or a heavy sound like a tuba?*

### Vocal Ranges and Registers:

**Female voices** from high to low:

soprano, mezzo soprano, alto, contralto

**Male voices** from high to low:

tenor, baritone, bass, basso profundo

### Orchestra instrument families:

**Strings:** violin, viola, cello, bass





**Brass:** trumpet, French horn, trombone, tuba

**Woodwinds:** piccolo, flute, clarinet, oboe,  
English horn, bassoon

**Percussion:** tympani, bass drum, snare drum,  
xylophone, marimba, cymbal,  
triangle, chimes

## 6. Pitch - the highness or lowness of a particular note.

*Pitches can repeat or move higher or lower on the musical staff by half steps, whole steps or leaps. A **leap** is moving to a note further away on the staff or with a greater interval than a step. An **interval** is the amount of space or distance in pitch between notes.*

			
Repeat	Half step	Whole step	Leap

*A sharp (#) raises a pitch one half step.  
A flat (b) lowers a pitch one half step.*

## 7. Tempo - the speed or pace of music. *How fast or slow is the music?*

Tempo markings are expressed in Italian and include: Lento - very slow Adagio - slow	Moderato - moderate Allegro - lively Presto - fast Vivace - very fast
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## 8. Dynamics - varying degree of loud and soft. *How loud or soft is the music?*

Pianissimo ( <i>pp</i> ) - very soft Piano ( <i>p</i> ) - soft mezzo piano ( <i>mp</i> ) - medium soft	mezzo forte ( <i>mf</i> ) - medium loud forte ( <i>f</i> ) - loud fortissimo ( <i>ff</i> ) - very loud
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## 9. Texture – The way individual parts of music are layered or the number of sounds occurring simultaneously. *Texture could also describe the instrumentation of a composition. For example, light texture uses few instruments while heavy texture would include many instruments.*

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